



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 144

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1998

No. 124

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by the guest Chaplain, Levi Shemtov, Rabbi, Director of the Washington Office, American Friends of Lubavitch, Washington, DC. Glad to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rabbi Levi Shemtov, Director of the Washington Office, American Friends of Lubavitch, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, our Father in Heaven, bless and grace this august body, the United States Senate. Fill this Chamber and through it the Nation with the strength of Your sovereignty and the power of Your comfort. May the Members of this body and its officers strive always to glorify Your name and through their devotion to You and true service to the inhabitants of the Nation.

As the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) approaches, commemorating the anniversary of Your creation of man, we stand before You while You sit in judgment. May this feeling of our ultimate need for mercy pervade our lives, and may we judge each other at least as favorably as we would like to be judged ourselves.

As our Nation faces tremendous challenges, we also possess a deep, enormous faith and capacity for healing. The Senate, reflecting the Nation, comprises men and women from various political, cultural, and religious backgrounds. We are thankful for the freedom to bring various views, but as we debate the significant issues of the day, let us remember the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of blessed memory, who taught, "the only way to soothe the differences between two sides is to seek how we are ultimately all on the same side."

Three hundred years ago, the Great Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidism, taught us that in every experience lies Divine Providence, giving man the ability to find and develop divinity in seemingly everyday activities. As the officers and Members of the Senate and their staffs go about their noble task of legislating the path for our Nation, with the will of the people, please let them see in their work not just mere political activity but divine endeavor, nothing less than partnership with God in perfecting the world, bringing redemption to all of mankind.

A happy and a healthy new year.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able majority leader, Senator LOTT of Mississippi, is recognized.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, on behalf of the Senate, I thank the rabbi for being with us this morning and for his prayer. We know this is a holy season for those of the Jewish faith, and we are pleased that you would join us and give us your prayer and ask for the Lord's blessings.

ORDERS FOR TODAY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Journal of Proceedings be approved, no resolutions come over under the rule, the call of the calendar be waived, the morning hour be deemed to have expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we are still consulting with both sides to see if we

will be able to go forward this morning. It is Thursday morning and it seems to me this would be a good time to make some legislative progress on the people's business. We had great difficulty yesterday, trying to schedule votes around Senators' own interests which I thought, in many instances, were inappropriate. I urge my colleagues to not put their own conveniences over the interests of the people's business or their other 99 colleagues.

Also, while there are obviously distractions and disagreements on what should be the business of the Senate, there are some things that we can do and should do. Unfortunately, yesterday we were not able to even go forward with debate because we could not get an agreement as to how to proceed on the issues. We have a unanimous consent agreement that we reached last Thursday that seemed to be fair and satisfactory to one and all on how to proceed on the bankruptcy reform legislation, including, at the insistence of the Senator from Massachusetts, a vote on a minimum wage.

We agreed that we would have a vote as soon as we took up the bankruptcy bill, we would have 2 hours of debate on minimum wage and then a vote. The Senator indicated he had hoped we would do that in the morning, rather than late at night, and we have wanted to try to accommodate that. But when we said, OK, good, Thursday morning, we will start at 9:30, we will do the debate, have a vote at 11:30 on minimum wage, he indicated he didn't want to do that.

So I don't know. I understand maybe he has a press conference at the White House, but he has to make a decision here. You know, are we going to go for press conferences, or are we going to go for the vote on something he says is very important to him, the minimum wage issue? I assume he will be here later and we will get something worked out as to how to proceed on that. In the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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